



# **Effective CEO Transitioning/Leadership Sustainability in North American Jewish Nonprofit Organizations**

**A RESEARCH STUDY OF 440 CEO'S**

**Spring 2012**

**Sponsored by:**

***The Jewish Communal Service Association of North America***

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## Project Direction

### **About Noble Consulting Associates, Inc.**

Noble Consulting Associates, Inc., based in Brookline, MA and Lenox, MA, is a strategic consulting firm providing counsel to boards and professional leadership. NCA, Inc. also provides executive coaching and professional development to CEOs, management teams, and high potential young talent. Additionally, the firm designs and conducts action-oriented research to explore root problems and provide viable solutions.

Dr. Steven J. Noble founded the firm in 2002 and is now Managing Director. He currently serves as Adjunct Professor of Leadership /Organizational Behavior at Boston University's Graduate School of Management. Before starting NCA, Inc. Steve was privileged to hold the positions of Senior VP of Birthright Israel, Senior Director of the first Mandel Executive Development Program for Federations Executives, VP for Research and Education at the Association of Management Consulting Firms, and Assistant Dean of Columbia University's Graduate School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). Steve began his career as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Tunisia. He earned a Doctorate in Education (College/University Administration) from Columbia and has a BA in History with High Distinction from Rutgers.

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### **About The Jewish Communal Service Association of North America**

The Jewish Communal Service Association of North America (JCSA) connects and enhances professional practice and leadership in the Jewish community. Working with a broad spectrum of organizations and individuals in the United States and Canada, JCSA provides networking opportunities that further collaboration across fields of service. JCSA brings together 13 local organizations, providing partnership and advancement opportunities. JCSA supports professional development and the creation and dissemination of educational resources; promoting best practices, recognition, advocacy and networking. JCSA actively assists in the creation of new groups – and in the development and retention of talent through prestigious awards which recognize exemplary leadership. JCSA's *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* focuses on professional standards, trends and developments, and critical thinking on important issues for the Jewish community and serves as the reference publication for the field. For more information, visit [www.jcsana.org](http://www.jcsana.org).

Noble Consulting Associates, Inc. and JCSA express their profound appreciation to the 23 funders who helped support this research (Page 8).

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
Acknowledgments	7
Background and Future Goals	9
Terminology in Survey and Report	11
Survey Design and Process	12
Survey Findings	
Emergency Back-Up Plans	13
Succession Plans	14
Temporary CEO Coverage	14
Obvious Successor?	15
Concerns About Stepping Down	16
Lame Duck Status	20
Selection of an Appropriate Successor	22
Gender-Related Data	23
Endorsement of Assistance and Support	24
Ten Key Recommendations	26
<b>Appendices:</b>	
<i>A. Survey Instrument</i>	31
<i>B. Best Practices</i>	49
<i>C. Template on Emergency Back-Up Plan</i>	51
<i>D. Template on Succession Plan</i>	53
<i>E. Further Resources (bibliography, workshops, organizations, etc.)</i>	55

## Executive Summary

This report explores the nature and causes of a major challenge faced by countless North American Jewish nonprofits: effective succession planning for CEO transitioning and organizational leadership sustainability. It concludes by proposing ten practical recommendations to address this challenge.

Huge numbers of CEOs are now well into their early and mid-sixties. Long before 2020, it is broadly projected that an overwhelming percent of these “aging baby-boomers” will be exiting the field. Most of these departures will be voluntary, but that will not always be the case. Too often, CEO departures have been marked by conflict—both within the leadership of the organization and “within” the CEO’s own mind and actions... or inactions.

Hence, the true challenge is to ensure not only that these departures will be less conflictual but also that they will be better planned and effective for both the CEOs and their organizations. This is essential so that dedicated, accomplished, and long-tenured professionals and their employer organizations can both be sustained and enriched following the incumbents’ departures.


In sum, the true transitioning challenge has three components: (1) how to better enhance a board’s own preparation for smoother and more effective transitioning in its top professional leadership; (2) how to create a process that is more conducive to CEOs’ planning for a smoother, more effective passing of the baton during their concluding tenures; and (3) how CEOs can plan and prepare for their own transitions to meaningful and fulfilling post-agency lives. This last component is particularly important because current CEOs are projected to have post-agency lives of 20 years or longer.

In the corporate sector, succession planning is accepted more generally as a prudent organizational reality. However, in the nonprofit sector, too often it generates high anxiety by the CEO and avoidance by both the leader and the organization, which defers planning actions to a point that is “too late” for all concerned. These scenarios serve neither the organizations nor CEO very well.

A survey was designed and fielded to approximately 1,500 CEOs in the Jewish nonprofit world to explore these transition challenges. It yielded a very high response rate: 440 CEOs responded to the survey with candid, insightful data that shed instructive light on the challenges that lie ahead.

Survey findings clearly point to the urgency of these challenges. One major finding is that the vast majority of Jewish nonprofits do not have an “in-place” emergency back-up plan to address the situation of an unforeseen event in which the CEO exits very abruptly. An even larger percentage of responding CEOs report that their organizations have no formalized succession plans. These troubling findings, and the reasons underpinning them, are cause for alarm in the Jewish community. Fortunately, they are also mandates for affirmative and, in many cases, immediate action steps.

This report also examines the reasons why CEOs of Jewish nonprofits and boards have been unwittingly delinquent in transition management. First, a great majority of CEOs reported that they prefer to leave on their own timetable because they have, heretofore, given so much invaluable—bordering on selfless—time and effort to their organization. Second, many CEOs are poorly prepared for post-



agency life. This failure to apply the finely honed planning skills they have used so well for organizational programs and services to their own transition to post-agency life is sadly ironic.

Third, there appears to be a shocking disconnect between CEOs' visions and plans for succession and the boards' visions and plans, if they are even known. Further, a surprisingly high percentage of CEOs exhibit relatively low confidence that their boards would select an appropriate successor. Finally, CEOs are also markedly concerned about being "lame ducks"—a status where their perceived and actual authority diminishes in a limbo period between announcing their intent to step down and their departure.

The report outlines ten recommendations that address the underlying reasons for the immediate challenges as well as provides long-range, sustainable solutions to the succession planning challenges in this decade.

To conclude, current transition management, whatever state it is in, must evolve into proactive transition leadership. For this to take place, both lay and professional leadership must be true partners in designing, implementing, and committing to viable and sustainable solutions.

# Introduction

Because of the many dimensions and complexities of this report, I recommend that readers first review the complete 2011 survey, contained in Appendix A. By doing so, readers can more reliably draw their own conclusions and be better equipped to support or challenge the findings and recommendations presented.

A total of 440 of approximately 1,500 surveyed CEOs in Jewish nonprofits opted to respond. This large number was unanticipated, but the survey's resonance was not.

What is the actual number of CEOs who head up Jewish organizations in North America over 55 years old? One can only speculate given sensitivity in age-related matters, but most observers estimate that there are between 1,300–1,800 such CEOs. These 440 respondents represent a wide cross-section (by size, mission, and region) of organizations within the North American Jewish nonprofit community.

This report presents the background for why this investigation was pursued, definitions of terminology used, principal findings, and recommendations. Appendices include the actual survey, **best practices** (including two templates that can be customized for use), and additional resources on succession planning available to the reader.

A final author's note: my goal in preparing this report was to lay out the challenge and thereby provide an imperative to implement its action steps. Legions of top executives are approaching the end of their tenures. Most have devoted long and illustrious years of service to their organizations and the Jewish community. Many are struggling with letting go and are uncertain and even myopic in envisioning what they will do in their post-agency lives. A very large majority can benefit from more caring, affirmative, proactive assistance. Certainly, all would benefit by learning to help themselves and to use a planning mode that is not unfamiliar to them. Having this report reside on a shelf or in an archived inbox would neither serve well the CEOs nor their organizations nor the community as a whole.

Should the reader have question about this report, its findings, or recommendations, contact [sjnoble@optonline.net](mailto:sjnoble@optonline.net).

*Steve*

Dr. Steven J. Noble

## Acknowledgments

Countless professionals and researchers in the Jewish communal service field, and many others external to the field, have been instrumental in the genesis, design, and analyses of this report as well as in the recommendations proposed. (My apologies for any names that I have inadvertently omitted.)

It is genuinely hoped that many of the individuals acknowledged here will be engaged in follow-up actions. Much still remains to be done to educate, promote, and implement more effective succession planning in the Jewish nonprofit field.


Early supporters and “encouragers” include Dr. Alan Siskind (former EVP/ CEO of Jewish Board of Family & Children’s Service—NY), Jeffrey Solomon, (President, Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies—NY), Marc Terrill (President/CEO of the Associated -Jewish Federation of Baltimore), Rafi Rone, (Director of Jewish and Israel Initiatives, Meyerhoff Family Fund—Baltimore), and Mark Sokoll (President/CEO Jewish Community Centers—Boston).

Four “retiree” veterans of Jewish communal service were also of considerable assistance in the early stages by sharing their transition experiences as well as accounts of their colleagues. These professionals are Norbert Fruehauf, Richard Jacobs, Frank Strauss, and Joan Fuld Strauss.

Additionally, wise counsel and support were provided by professional and lay leadership of the Jewish Communal Service Association—principally, Jacob Solomon, (President/CEO of Greater Miami Jewish Federation), Brenda Gevertz (JCSA Executive Director), Layah Blacksberg (JCSA’s Program Coordinator) and Gail Naron Chalew, editor of the JCSA *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*.

An Informal Advisory Group of researchers and practitioners provided incalculable aid, particularly in instrument design and data analysis. Among this group are Jack Ukeles (Ukeles Associates), Leora Isaacs (JESNA), Judy Mann (Jewish Funders Network), Shifra Broznick (Advancing Women Professionals & the Jewish Community), Lyn Light Geller and Jennifer Rosenberg (UJA-Federation NY), Laurence Kottler-Berkowitz (JFNA), Stuart Himmelfarb/ David Elcott (B3 Jewish Boomer Platform), Don Tebbe and Donna Stark (Transition Guides/Annie E. Casey Foundation—Baltimore), Tim Wolfred (Compass Point—San Francisco), David Edell, (DRG-Executive Search), Professor Michael Austin (Mack Center, Nonprofit Management—UC Berkeley), and Professors Kathy Kram and Tim Hall of Boston University Graduate School of Management

Also integral in this initiative were the presidents of umbrella associations in each field: Lee Sherman (Association of Jewish Family and Children’s Agencies), Jeremy Fingerman (Foundation for Jewish Camp), Allan Finkelstein (Jewish Community Centers Association) Jerry Silverman and Debbie Smith (consultant) (Jewish Federations of North America), Livia Thompson (North American Temple Administrators), Harry Hauser (North American Association of Synagogue Executives), Joshua Elkin/ Amy Katz (Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education), Mark Kramer (RAVSAK), Scott Brown (Hillel), Genie Cohen (International Association of Jewish Vocational Services), Martin Goetz (Association of



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We would be remiss if we did not express sincere thanks to the 23 funders who made this survey and report possible. Principal Funders are ACBP (Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies), Avi Chai Foundation, Meyerhoff Family Funds, Pearlstone Foundation, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation, Phyllis Cook, Philanthropic Consultant/Board member, Jim Joseph Foundation. Supporting grants were received from the ASSOCIATED-Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, Combined Jewish Philanthropies (Boston), Jewish United Fund (Chicago), Detroit Jewish Federation, Greater Miami Jewish Federation, UJC MetroWest (NJ), UJA Federation NY, Philadelphia Jewish Federation, Cleveland Federation, St. Louis Jewish Federation, Toronto Jewish Federation, Washington DC Jewish Federation, Advancing Women Professionals & the Jewish Community, Birthright Israel Foundation, DRG-Executive Search, JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) and the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to Scott Sporn, Research Analyst on this initiative, who has made an extraordinary contribution by imparting his research experiences within the corporate world to this assignment on nonprofits. Scott was primarily responsible for the graphical presentation of all data.



## Background and Future Goals

This research study had its genesis in my numerous executive coaching assignments with nonprofit executives. Over the past decade, approximately half of these assignments have been with CEOs in Jewish communal service.

I became increasingly aware of and concerned about how many CEOs in their early sixties had appallingly little clarity or had done no real planning regarding their post-agency lives. So many CEOs seemed to be myopic as to what might happen next. Many also appeared to be overly committed to their careers or, in some cases, their “callings.” It was, therefore, not so surprising that so many seemed to feel entitled to extend their tenures as long as they felt they were contributing. Later, after they were forced to step down, many of these same CEOs reported that they were “blindsided” by a new (and often young) Board Chair who, on short notice, opted not to renew their contract. The troubling byproducts of unanticipated, abrupt, and what were perceived as callous dismissals were feelings of bitterness, betrayal, and, of most concern, “*Now what will I do with my life?*”


*So many CEOs seemed to be myopic to what might happen next*

After seeing and hearing far too many sad departure scenarios, I approached Jeffrey Solomon, ACBP President, to ask the foundation to fund a small, targeted two-field study of Federation and JCC CEOs in their 60s. ACBP readily provided the requested funds. From that point on, the research study mushroomed into a major investigation of virtually all fields in Jewish communal service. JCSA agreed to sponsor the research initiative. Four other Jewish foundations joined in a mini-partnership. Subsequently, a group of large city federations and other organizations joined as “supporting funders” for 2011. Virtually all funders renewed for 2012, and new ones joined the partnership (all 23 funders are listed in the Acknowledgments).

The next two phases of the research initiative involved designing a customized survey instrument (Appendix A) and connecting with the umbrella association presidents (noted in the Acknowledgments) to engage them directly and, through them, indirectly to reach the CEOs of their member agencies. These CEOs were the target population who would be sent the actual surveys.

The survey, piloted on a select group of CEOs in early Fall 2011, was fully launched in November 2011. Each association president (or designee) provided CEOs from member agencies with the survey link. Survey data collection was completed in mid-January 2012, and data analyses began shortly thereafter. Preliminary findings were tested on seven individuals cited in the Acknowledgments. Association presidents were also sent aggregated data findings and asked to identify areas for more in-depth analysis. That process is ongoing.

After the release of this report, focus groups will be held in three to five cities of different sizes and in



different regions to further test out the findings and recommendations on different age cohort groups of CEOs (e.g., under 60, over 64, etc.).

Additionally, I hope to conduct focus groups with board chairs to ascertain how the report's findings and recommendations resonate with them. This seems an essential follow-up step given the need for genuine, committed, and full buy-in from the dual partners in the lay/professional leadership of any nonprofit organization. Absent this partner alignment on mutual ownership of the challenge, it is doubtful that anything substantive will result that will make a demonstrable and sustained difference in effective succession planning.

Funding for further research and other follow up steps may be called for to address recommendations noted.

The use of specific terms and phrases, unless clearly defined, can lead to confusion or misinterpretation. With that caveat in mind, terms and phrases used in the report (as well as survey) are defined below.

**CEO or CEO-Level:** Generic position title used to refer to the very top professional in the organization. In that individual's organization he or she may be called Executive Director, Director, Head of School, Executive Vice President, President, National Director, or the like.

**Stepping Down:** The actual departure point from the CEO position. Stepping down can be due to a variety of reasons, including retirement, involuntary separation for cause, or even "at will." For example, the CEO may move to a higher or lateral position, be burned out, or become redundant due to an organizational merger. As the data suggest, the stepping-down phase can be as long as 2+ years, or it can occur on very short notice.

**Post-Agency Life:** The time period after fully stepping down from CEO to the point of being physically or mentally incapacitated or dying.

**Emergency Back-Up Plan (EBP):** A written and unambiguously worded document for a contingency plan that spells out what needs to be done when an abrupt, unexpected CEO departure takes place.

**Succession Plan:** A well-conceived and proactive document that provides guidance, direction, and measured steps to a future point in time where there is a planned or, at times, unplanned, CEO departure.

**Jewish Communal Service:** Broad spectrum of Jewish nonprofits that includes organizations and agencies in human/social services, religious practice, education on all levels, advocacy, charitable/fundraising, camping, youth programs, and senior/aging programs. The organizations are overwhelmingly Jewish in funding and staff. They are also governed by a board of Jewish volunteers. However, although they principally address Jewish-related causes and missions, they do not exclusively serve Jewish populations.

**Jewish Communal Service Association:** The North American membership association representing the interests and needs of individual professionals and the broad Jewish communal service field.

**Jewish Umbrella Associations:** North American/national membership associations that represent organizations in the same field. For example, for Jewish Federations, Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) represents the interests of the field and provides services/programs for individual federations. Jewish Community Centers Association (JCCA) does the same for JCCs, as does the Foundation for Jewish Camp for Jewish camps. With virtually every field represented in this survey, there is a parallel membership "umbrella" association.

## Survey Instrument

The survey instrument (Appendix A) contained 35 questions. The initial 16 were designed to solicit demographic data on a broad cross-section of Jewish nonprofit CEOs over the age of 55 and on their employer organizations. The next sequence of questions focused on the CEOs' experiences, perspectives, and perceptions related to thinking about, and planning for, "stepping down." The last five questions were open-ended and provided CEO respondents with an opportunity to offer ideas, list best practices, suggest recommendations, and request personal and confidential email or phone follow-up. (Sixteen CEOs responded to Question 34 on the survey and requested individual follow-ups).

The survey instrument is in Appendix A. Cross-tabulation of data by specific demographic variables has been undertaken and preliminarily analyzed. These aggregated data, including cross-tab analyses of key variables, have been shared with many funders and also with some umbrella associations. All respondents have electronic access to this by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/85ftxv6>.

Although the survey was designed to register data of CEOs over age 55, it is important to note that not all respondents listed themselves in one of the seven age groupings over 55. Some association presidents indicated they could not segment their mailings by age. Consequently, some association mailings were sent to their entire member list of CEOs, regardless of age. It was mentioned, however, that the survey was designed and targeted for more senior age CEOs approaching transitional stages and stepping down. (Note: the words "retirement" or "succession planning" were not used in the survey or cover notes.)

Given the apparent widespread interest in the succession planning topic, a significant number of CEOs under the age of 55 opted to respond. However, in the analyses of many questions, the "under 55" group was segmented separately.

The survey also probed many other relevant variables (e.g., marital status, "grandparent-hood," regional location, work experience prior to entering the field of Jewish communal service). Data relating to all these variables appear to influence how each CEO responded to specific stepping-down questions. However, this report focuses on only a select group of variables. All others have been preliminarily explored through cross-tabulations.

Open-ended responses to questions found in Appendix A are too voluminous to include here. However, the essence of the respondents' comments, feedback, and observations has been incorporated into the findings and recommendations accessible online.

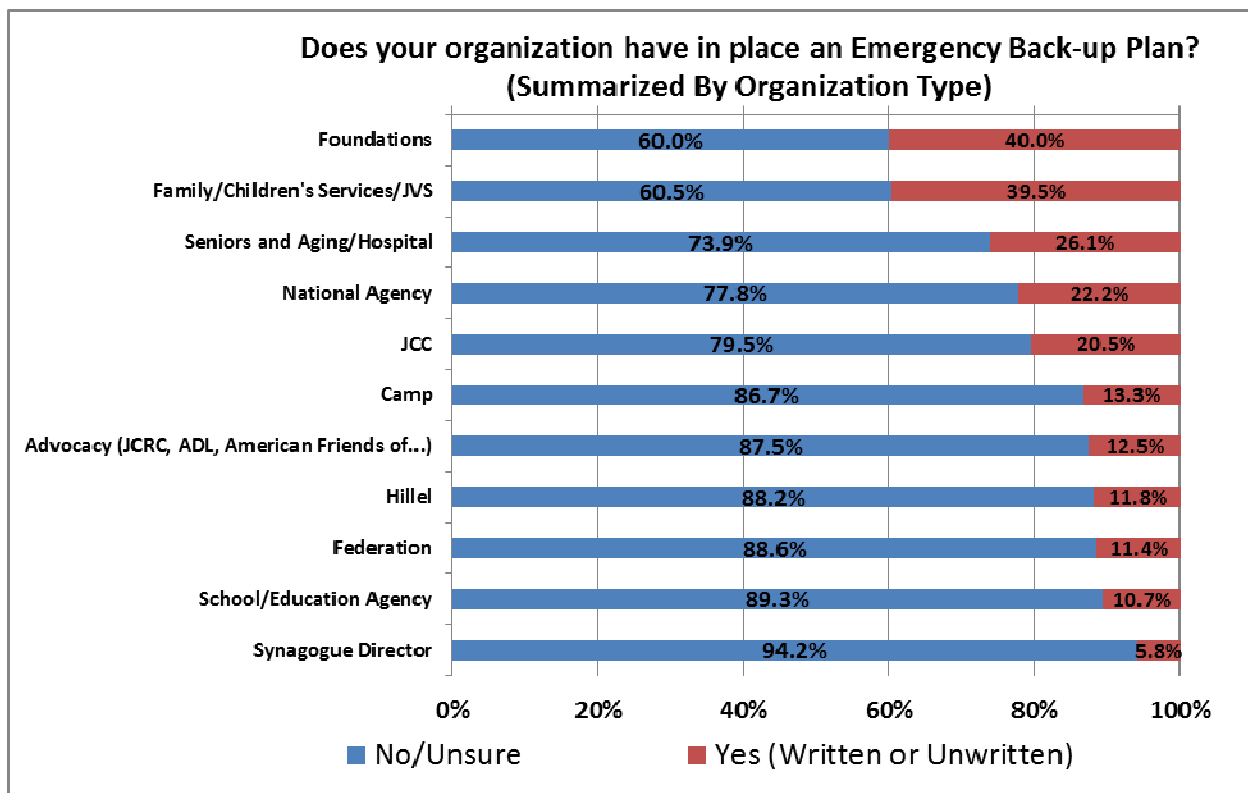
Presented in this section are nine principal findings meriting the most attention and, ideally, action;

action in the form of ten specific recommendations proposed in the next section.

### 1) EMERGENCY BACK-UP PLANS

Conceivably, the most salient and alarming finding is the virtual nonexistence of emergency back-up plans (EBPs). EBPs are in-place contingency plans for when a CEO suddenly and unexpectedly exits the organization either because of any positive occurrence (e.g., an abrupt departure to take a “job of a lifetime”) or, more frequently, an unfortunate occurrence (a health-related crisis). Whatever the cause or circumstance, the CEO exits almost immediately with no notice.

The vast majority (83%) of organizations surveyed have no explicit EBP policy. However, several organizational fields have adopted this precautionary measure to a greater extent. Approximately 40% of Jewish Foundations as well as Family Services/JVS report having EBPs in place. Unfortunately, findings across all fields are not nearly as positive (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Emergency Back-up Plan**

### 2) SUCCESSION PLANS

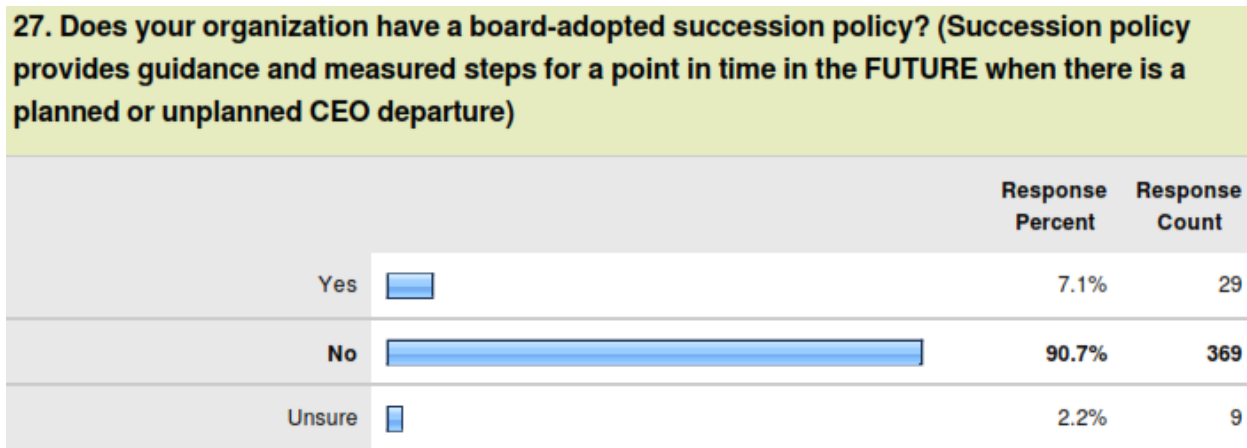
Jewish nonprofits appear even more delinquent in formulating and articulating succession plans for their very top professional leadership than in crafting EBPs. (However, the consequences of lacking a succession plan are not as dire as not having an EBP, because there is usually sufficient time to formulate a plan before the CEO exits.)

Perhaps the failure to engage in succession planning is due to the emotion and apprehension evoked in top executives in all fields, private or public, by the very term. Succession planning tends to presage the end of one's tenure and is viewed with little enthusiasm and with a wide range of concerns, as elaborated on in the following sections.

An overwhelming 91% of respondents state that their organizations do not have a succession plan (see Figure 2). An additional 2% are "unsure," and 33 respondents skipped the question entirely. Therefore this could mean that 95% of all Jewish nonprofits lack succession plans.

A small minority (7%) report having a succession plan in place, but based on some follow-up conversations, the most important parties are frequently unaware of them.

Further, based on conversations with Board Chairs and with former and current CEOs, the challenge of formulating well-conceived succession plans is invariably deferred to the Chair-elect's term, who, in turn, may pass it on again to his or her successor. Creating a succession plan rarely reaches front-burner status.



**Figure 2: Lack of Board-Adopted Succession Policies**

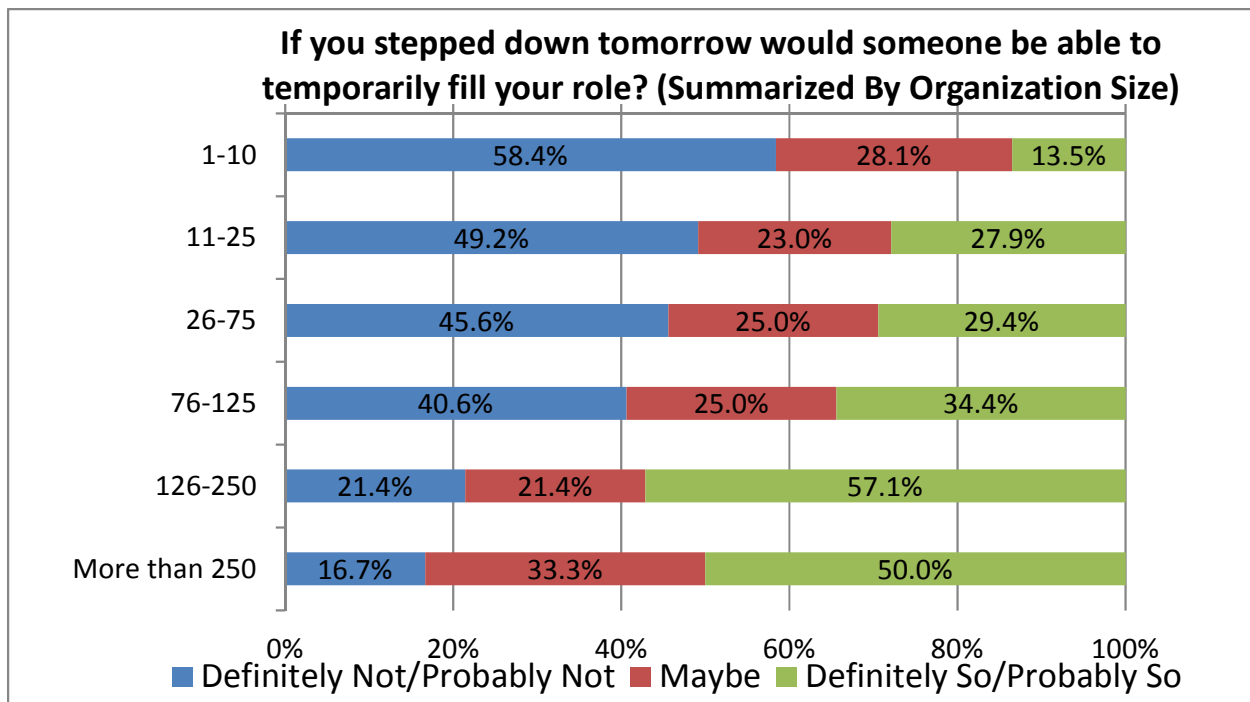
### **3) TEMPORARY CEO COVERAGE**

Related to the lack of EBPs and succession plans is the finding of the lack of planning regarding who might step in temporarily should the CEO become "unavailable."

Survey results indicate that the large majority of organizations do not have a plan in place for a temporary replacement in the absence of their CEO. Only 30% of all CEOs indicate that their

organization would “definitely” or “probably” have a person in place to temporarily assume the CEO role. This problem is especially prevalent (and not unexpectedly) in small organizations (see Figure 3). A majority (58%) of CEOs of small organizations (1–10 staff) state they “definitely” or “probably” do not have a current employee capable of temporarily assuming the CEO role in an emergency. In these cases, often the Board Chair steps in on a part-time, provisional basis.

Increasingly, large organizations, if they have no one on staff to fill in temporarily, retain “interim execs” (see also Appendix A, Question 20, for who might temporarily assume all or part of the CEO’s responsibilities)

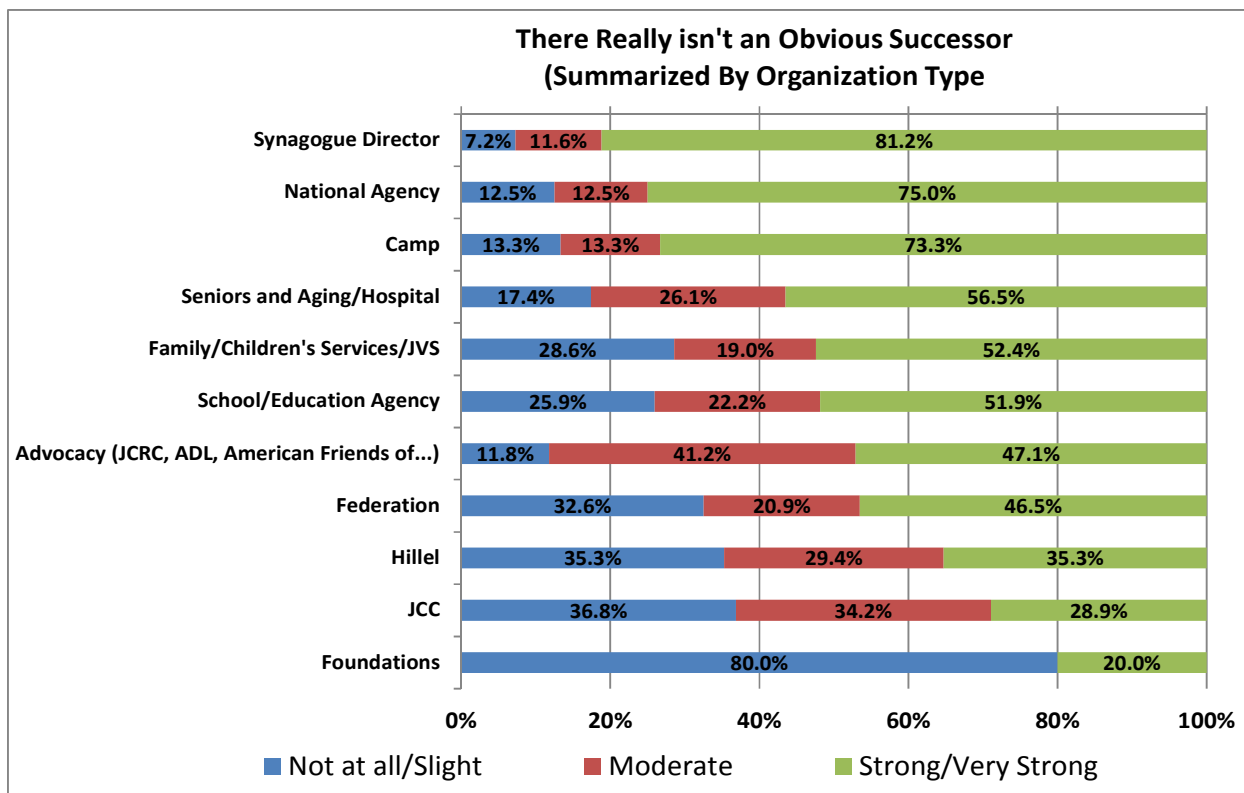


**Figure 3: Ability to Temporarily Fill the CEO Role**

#### 4) **OBVIOUS SUCCESSOR?**

There also are clearly marked differences across organizational fields in whether the organization has an obvious CEO successor on staff or in mind. Figure 4 shows that more than 80% of synagogue directors are hardly sanguine that there is an obvious successor. More positively, approximately two-thirds of CEOs at JCCs, foundations and Hillels express strong confidence there is an obvious successor on board who might ultimately assume the top spot.

Further exploration is warranted to determine whether having obvious successors is a function of staff size or an indication of an important step in a succession planning strategy; that is, a process to



**Figure 4: Lack of Obvious Successors by Organization Type**

identify, cultivate, and “pipeline” internal bench strength. Whether this individual will ultimately become CEO is another issue that will be determined by the board and possibly with assistance from a reputable executive search firm.

#### 5) **CONCERNS ABOUT STEPPING DOWN**

The most extensive line of questioning in the survey explored concerns about stepping down expressed by CEOs when asked to view/consider their own “stepping-down” point. Figure 5 illuminates the relative importance of five potential areas of individual concern (see Appendix A, Question 21, for a complete list of ten areas of concern).

Not surprisingly, economic uncertainties are the primary concern, given today’s volatile economy and the omnipresent concern about safeguarding retirement accounts.

However, just a slightly lower percentage (59%) of CEOs are either “strongly/ very strongly” concerned about stepping down because they “devoted so much to the job, they prefer leaving when they feel it is appropriate.” This finding suggests a troubling degree of CEO-expressed “ownership” of their organizations. Quite often, when the actual transition approaches, this high degree of personal possessiveness proves conflictual to CEOs and boards; the “letting go of the reins” process tends to be



harder and fraught with emotional and logistical challenges for all concerned. The corollary survey finding “my job is not done, more to do...” adds credence to the “letting go” apprehension expressed by CEOs.

Further substantiating this sentiment are data from Question 18. When asked who decides when the CEO steps down, nearly 40% checked “CEO solely” or “Mostly CEO.”

An additional high degree of concern about stepping down that surfaced in the data related to the extent to which one’s “post-agency” life is not anticipated to be “meaningful and fulfilling.” Without doubt, this lack of clarity and uncertainty about one’s future do not augur well for positive organizational transitions nor for a healthy (physical as well as mental) post-agency life, which for this current boomer generation, could extend for 20 years or longer.

One other noteworthy data point validating an earlier finding is that approximately half the CEOs surveyed express real concerns that “there wasn’t any obvious successor.” This perception adds weight to a CEO feeling that perhaps stepping down would not be an organizationally responsible move.

It bears repeating that the CEO respondents harbor a strong sentiment that, because they have given so much of themselves to their organizations, they prefer to step down on their own terms. What is surprising is that this sentiment does not appear to change based on the CEO’s length of tenure.

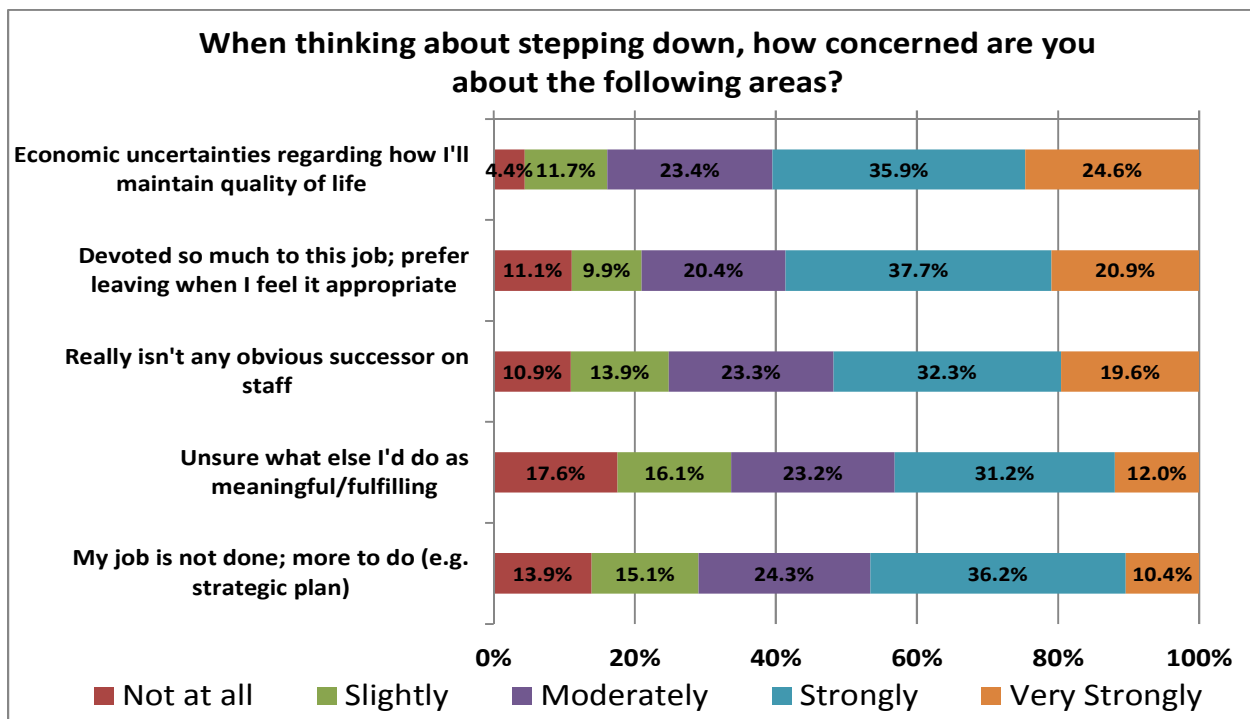
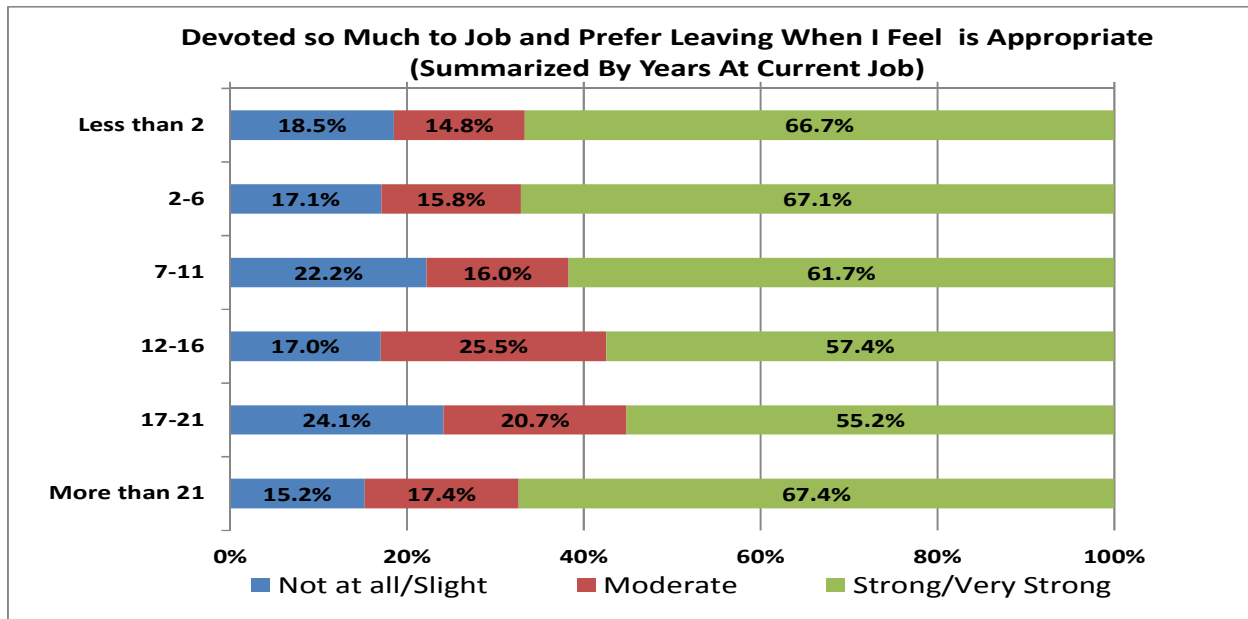


Figure 5: Numerous Areas of Concern Regarding Stepping Down

Figure 6 shows that CEOs with less than 2 years of tenure are just as likely to subscribe to this sentiment as those with more than 20 years of tenure.

Also of note is the very small difference among age groups in the percentage of CEOs reporting that they have a clear idea of how they might spend their post-agency lives. One would assume CEOs in their mid- to late 60s would have a much clearer idea of what they would do after stepping down than

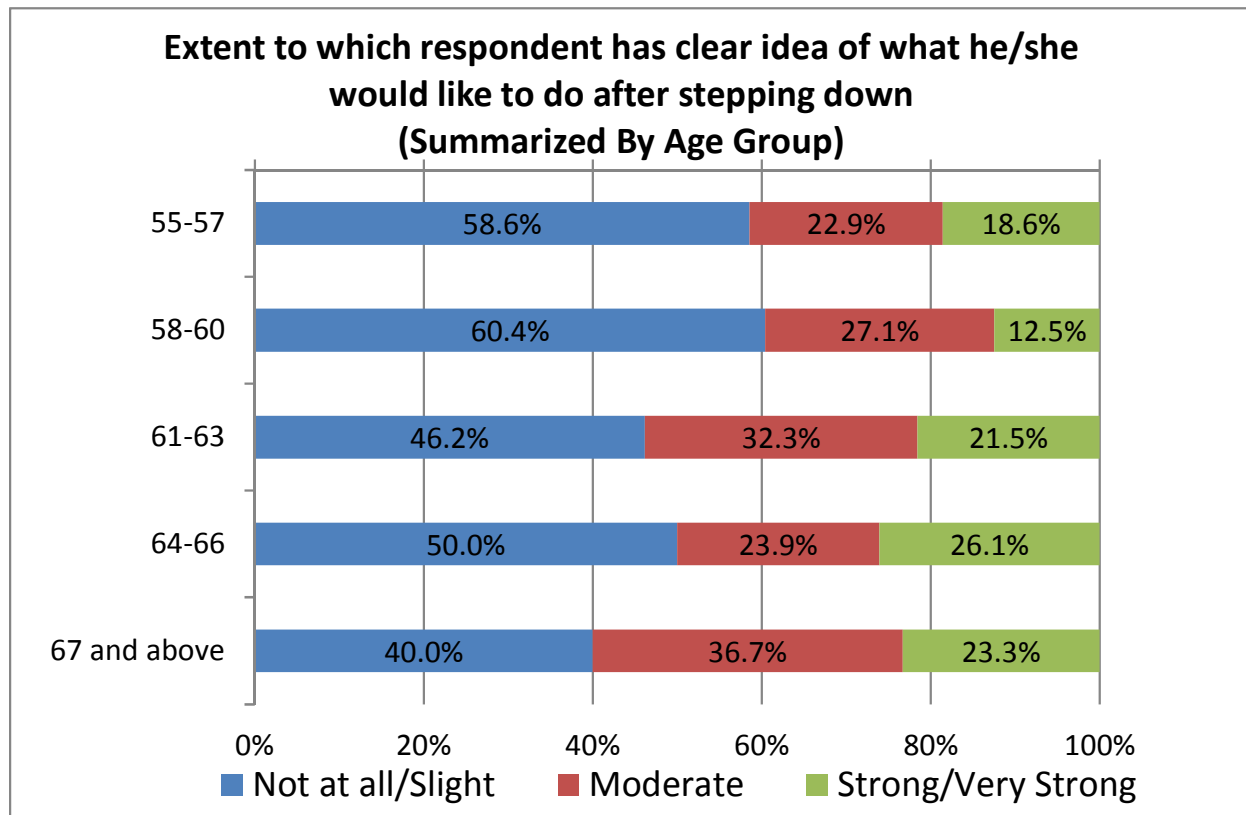


**Figure 6: Preference to Step Down When CEO Believes It Is Appropriate**

would those in their 50s. However, this is not the case. Survey findings indicate no real differences in post-agency clarity between all age groups in the survey. Figure 7 demonstrates that only 23% of those older than age 67 have a “strong/very strong” idea of what they would do after stepping down, which is merely 5% greater than among those aged 55–57.

This baffling finding lends itself to several possible hypotheses. One is that because more senior CEOs have become so accustomed to devoting so much of their lives to their organization, they feel guilty carving out any personal time for their own future needs. Another hypothesis is that many CEOs are in denial and assume their CEO tenure will extend as long as they desire so why should they formulate future plans. Or perhaps CEOs feel that their boards are appropriately attending to their future-oriented needs and that they themselves do not have to be concerned: they will be “well taken care of” by their boards.

Whatever the reasons, the data support, quite emphatically, that CEOs are devoting very little time and focus to developing a clear idea of what they might be doing after they step down. Consequently, they are not proactively and thoughtfully planning for that inevitability.



**Figure 7: Little Idea of Plans After Stepping Down**

Figure 8 substantiates previous findings regarding a demonstrable lack of clarity on post-agency life. Forty-three percent of respondents indicate either “strongly/very strongly” that if they stepped down, they have little clarity and are unsure what else they would do that would be as meaningful or fulfilling. Only one-third of respondents indicate a high degree of clarity.

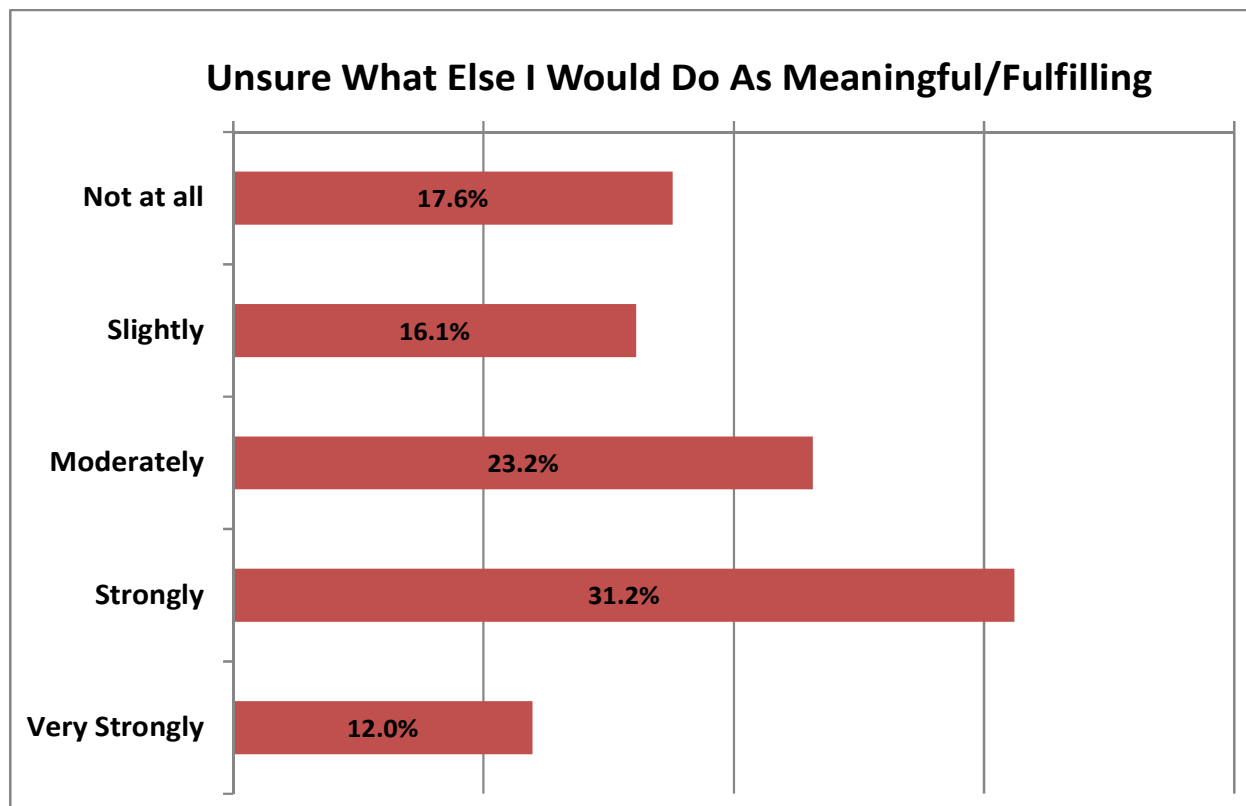







Figure 8: Unprepared for Post-Agency Life

## 6) LAME DUCK STATUS

In a related line of questioning, substantial numbers of CEOs registered troubling concerns related to the prospects of becoming a “lame duck.” Figure 9 shows only 29% of respondents indicating they are “not at all” concerned about the lame duck issue, whereas 42% record being “moderately/strongly or very strongly” concerned. Although many interpretations can be offered for what causes this high level of concern, it may well reflect a lack of self-confidence on the part of the CEO. More likely, it may indicate a lack of trust in those to whom they report—the board—which they feel might “abandon” them during the transition period. It may also reflect a lack of trust in their own management team whom they feel might bypass them during this transitional period. These speculative causes for their lame duck apprehension were not probed further in this research.






**22. How concerned are you about the "lame duck" issue? ("Lame duck" status has been defined as the period between the announcement to step down and the actual stepping down and where incumbent may be perceived as having less authority/influence with staff and other constituencies)**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		29.3%	120
Slightly		28.1%	115
<b>Moderately</b>		<b>30.1%</b>	<b>123</b>
Strongly		10.5%	43
Very Strongly		2.0%	8
answered question			409


**Figure 9: Concern About "Lame Duck" Issue**

The CEOs expressed an additional lame duck status concern, perceived or real. In Figure 10 about 40% of respondents report they are "moderately/strongly/very strongly" concerned about being asked to leave earlier than intended, should they publicly announce a specific date to step down. Whether or not to declare an intention to step down clearly remains a serious dilemma and weighty concern for a significant percentage of CEOs.

**23. If you were to make your intention to step down known to your board chair, how concerned are you about being asked to step down earlier than intended?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		36.7%	150
Slightly		27.6%	113
Moderately		23.0%	94
Strongly		10.0%	41
Very Strongly		2.7%	11
answered question			409

**Figure 10: Concern About Revealing Intention to Step Down**



In sum, these two “lame duck” findings may, in part, explain why CEOs are often hesitant to take an important first step in effective succession planning. Many CEOs worry that after declaring their decision to step down, they may be functioning with diminished authority for an extended period or that their board may urge them to move up the declared exit date.

There is little doubt that the timing of the announcement of an incumbent’s stepping down is highly important for many parties—the current CEO, the board and, indeed, any possible on-staff successors

***The timing of intended departure of the incumbent is exceedingly important.***

for the CEO spot. That possible heir apparent may well be approached by search firms or directly by other organizations to interview for CEO positions in a different organization or field. So, indeed, the timing of intended departure of the incumbent is exceedingly important.

How much notice should the CEO give that he or she is stepping down? Question 17 presents findings on the amount of time that CEOs feel is appropriate. Fifty-one percent of the respondents checked off “between 6 months and 1 year.” Whether that is sufficient time depends greatly on whether a successor has been identified and a well-conceived and mutually agreed-on process is in place.

## **7) SELECTION OF AN APPROPRIATE SUCCESSOR**

CEOs surveyed report a surprisingly low level of confidence that their boards would find the right replacement. Figure 11 illustrates only 25% of respondents feel “strongly/very strongly” that their board would find the right replacement; a significantly larger 40% express very little confidence (“slightly/not at all”) in the board’s ability to choose wisely.

A host of hypotheses can be posited for this lack of confidence; however, these lines of inquiry were not central to this investigation. Yet the reasons for this lack of confidence do merit further analysis and possible follow-up interviews. A cynical reason may relate to many CEOs’ feelings they are irreplaceable. More likely, though, is the view held by a large percentage of CEOs that their boards do not have a realistic grasp of what is needed to effectively and efficiently run their own organization. Whatever the reason for this finding, it indicates the lack of one element of a trusting lay/professional relationship: the recognition and awareness of CEO job requisites.

25. If you were to leave your position within the next 6-12 months, how confident are you that your board will find the right replacement?






		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		8.0%	33
Slightly		31.7%	130
Moderately		35.1%	144
Strongly		19.0%	78
Very Strongly		6.1%	25

Figure 11: Low Confidence in the Board's Ability to Select a Successor

## 8) GENDER-RELATED DATA

In this representative sample of CEOs in Jewish nonprofits, there were two findings of note regarding gender balance in the CEO ranks. Prior "conclusions" regarding this area have largely been anecdotal, albeit based on reasonable assumptions or projections. In these current data, however, the findings are more quantitatively established.

Of the CEOs responding to the survey, more than 60% are men. That said, there is tremendous variation by organizational field and size in the percentage of men versus women. For example, synagogues are led primarily (60%) by women, whereas camps are headed predominantly (87%) by men. Further, men are significantly more likely (72%) to be CEOs of large

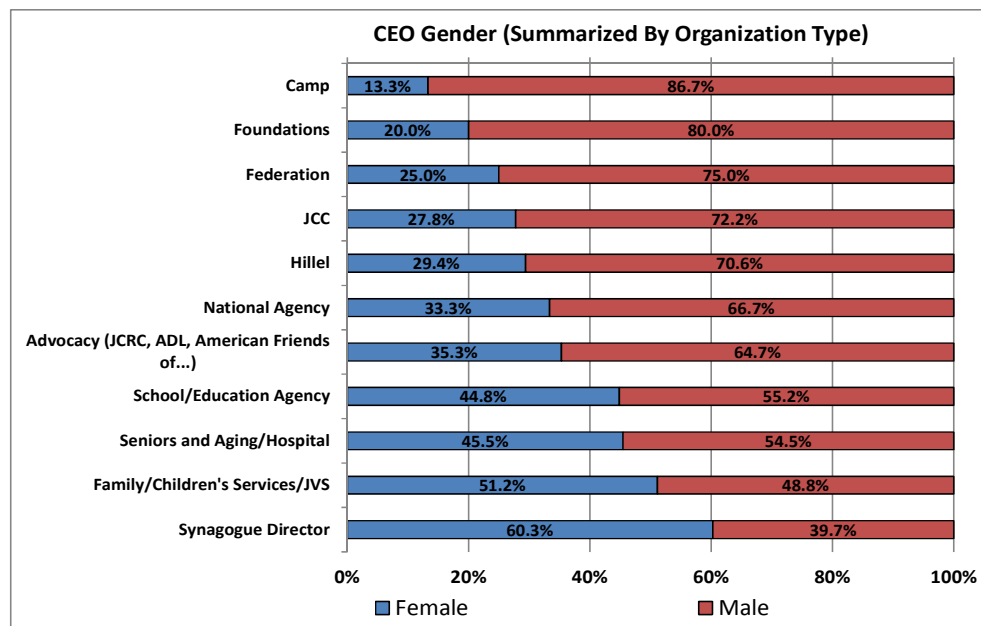
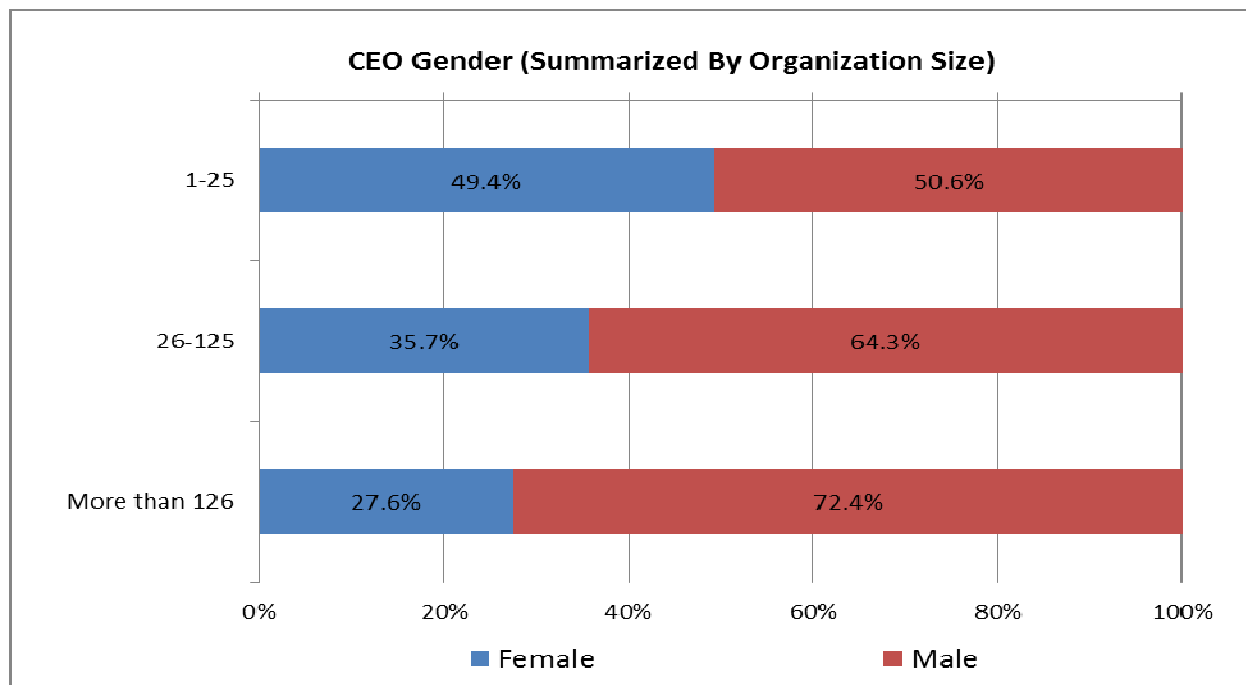


Figure 12: Gender Differences by Organization Type



**Figure 13: Gender Differences by Organization Size**

organizations, based on staff size. These results are shown in Figures 12 and 13.

Despite male predominance in CEO-level positions, the survey data indicate clearly that, of those agencies with a designated #2 professional, a sizeable majority (70%) of them are women.

This gender-related research on CEOs is not a principal focus of this current research initiative. However, it merits further exploration because it has a considerable impact on the diversity and richness of applicant pools for full consideration in CEO succession choices. Ask any search committee or executive search firm whether it feels there is a sufficient pool of highly qualified candidates, men or women, to choose from for CEO spots, and you will most likely get strong agreement that applicant pools must be enriched and expanded.

## **9) ENDORSEMENT OF ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT**

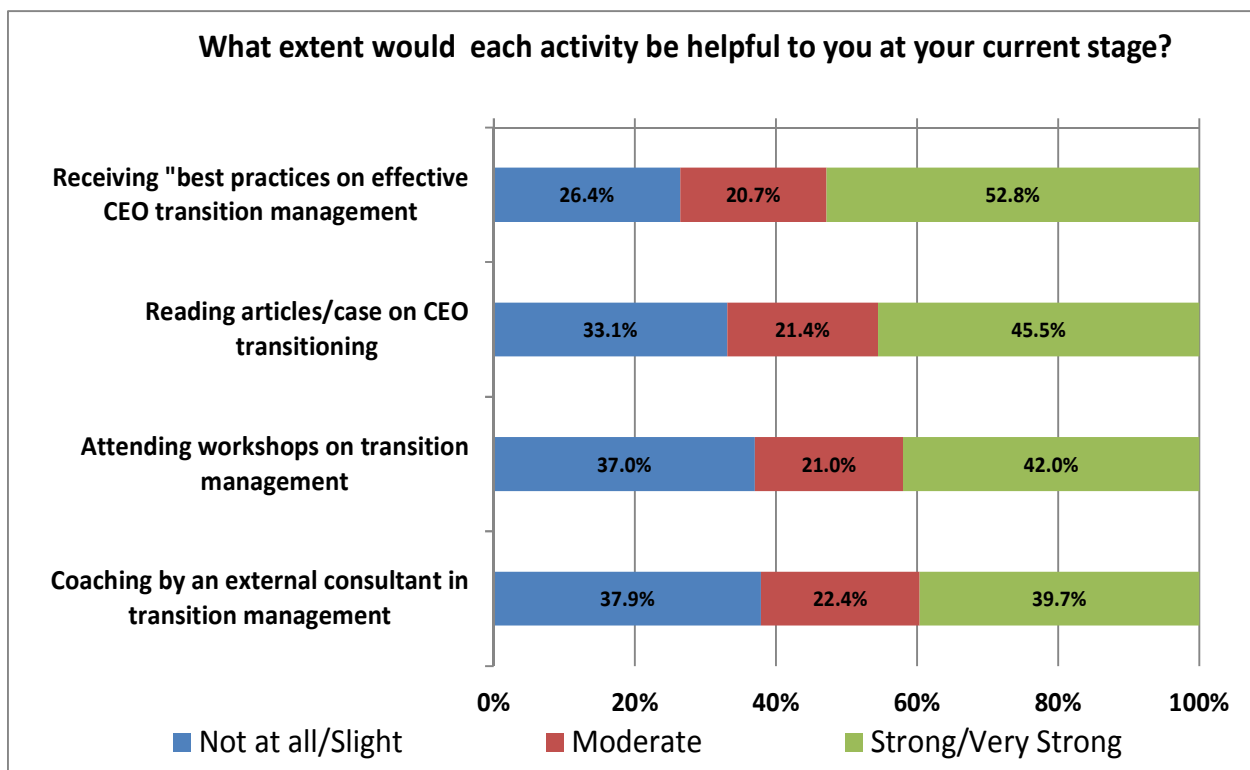
On a high note, CEO respondents registered considerable endorsement for participating in a range of initiatives to enhance their preparation and planning for the transitioning process for their organizations and for themselves. The four specific areas listed in Figure 14 received the most interest.

Of particular note, a majority of CEO's indicate "strongly/very strongly" that receiving a list of "best practices" in transition management would be quite helpful. Accessing articles and attending workshops were also high on the wish list, being affirmed by 40% of CEOs. Receiving coaching by an external executive coach and by peers in their fields who had recently and successfully stepped down



also received 40% endorsement (see Question 29 for details on these and all other activity areas presented).

However, when asked what they were currently doing in transition planning, the findings were not nearly as encouraging. The old adage, “actions speak louder than words” may be operative here. When asked in an open-ended question (#29) to list “any recommended or specific best practices in which you engage, have engaged or are aware of,” less than 20% indicated any action that could be considered substantive. This response did not vary by age group. (Appendix B, Best Practices, lists the major areas reported by respondents.)



**Figure 14: Helpful Transition Management Activities**

## Ten Key Recommendations

The following ten recommendations are presented in order of “most immediate need” for formulating action steps. Before each recommendation is a summary of the findings that support it.

**FINDING:** A large majority of CEOs (and apparently their boards) are not preparing for the process (nor likelihood) of stepping down at the age of 65. Question: Should organizations and executives now be viewing the age of 68 or 70 as the “old 65,” as the time to step down? That is, should the projected stepping down or retirement point be moved back three to five years?


**1 RECOMMENDATION:** In making this recommendation, I am concerned about the need to change the mindset behind rigorously adhering to a set retirement age, rather than changing the legal imposition of such a requirement. Boards, executives, and umbrella associations should place the issue of raising the retirement age—age recalibration—as a key agenda item for discussion and decision. However, this recalibration would have serious implications for the entire organization. For example, it would probably mean much more training for the incumbent to stay abreast in technology, social media, and “millennial generation” areas. It would increase the willingness of #2’s waiting in the wing to “jump ship” and adversely affect the acceleration of the talent pipelines in low and mid-range levels. Finally, it could have a significant impact on personnel budgets through increasing senior-level salary scales, pension pools, and the like.

More broadly, the sensitive and emotive subject of succession planning needs to be front and center and not relegated to the next Board Chair’s term, particularly for organizations with CEOs in their 60s. There is a need to promote more realistic and transparent conversations for effective succession planning for those organizations and their incumbents.

**FINDING:** An alarmingly low percentage (18%) of Jewish nonprofits have emergency back-up plans (EBPs) in place. As a consequence, a significantly high number of organizations in the Jewish communal service field are putting their operations and the needs of constituents at grave risk, should their CEOs exit suddenly and unexpectedly.

**2 RECOMMENDATION:** Every Jewish nonprofit, regardless of size or mission, should set aside focused, dedicated time for senior staff and a special board task force to formulate an EBP and keep it handy. One highly useful template for creating a customized EBP plan is presented in Appendix C.

**FINDING:** An even lower percentage (only 9%) maintain succession plans for top professional leadership. Another way of interpreting this sobering finding is that 91% of the organizations surveyed are not engaging in effective planning nor assuming any real accountability for sustaining their



leadership succession. Ironically, these same organizations engage in effective planning in their general program and service areas for their constituencies.

**3 RECOMMENDATION:** Every Jewish nonprofit, regardless of size or mission, should set aside ample and, probably, confidential time, for the Board Chair/Board Chair-elect, and incumbent CEO to convene, ideally off site, and formulate a well-conceived and fully “signed off” CEO succession plan. One template for an adaptable succession plan is found in Appendix D.


**FINDING:** A startling revelation in this survey was the overwhelming percentage of current CEOs who self-reported being ill prepared for post-agency life. Moreover, conversations with many retired executives who have already stepped down (by choice or involuntarily), as well as secondhand “horror stories” of other execs’ departures, present most unpleasant sagas of insufficient or no planning for post-agency life. This unsatisfactory scenario for incumbent CEOs is especially troubling when one considers how devoted and selfless most have been during decades of effective, loyal service to their organization, its mission and, more broadly, to the caring field of Jewish communal service.

**4 RECOMMENDATION:** Much more attention and action have to be taken to avoid these unpleasant conclusions of incumbents’ tenure. Maximizing the prospects for meaningful and fulfilling post-agency lives for incumbent CEOs must be an imperative. One can rightly contend that the “system” owes it to them for their long and dedicated years of service.

This mandate should be the joint responsibility of incumbents, boards, umbrella associations, and local/national Jewish foundations. Foundations should provide more support for generating best practice models, funding workshops, and coaching (see Recommendation 7).

That said, the onus rests with incumbents to take more charge and responsibility for their own post-agency lives. The first step for CEOs is the full recognition and acceptance that a “passing the baton” will take place... and that they would be well served to measure and plan the distance to that inevitable point. During that transition period, they need to focus as diligently on their own next steps as they are on leading the organization.

**FINDING:** Considerable interest was expressed in learning more about CEO transitioning processes and post-agency options through participation in a variety of activities, including workshops, readings, executive coaching, and peer networking. However, most had little idea what they needed to be doing to better plan and prepare for post-agency life. Surprisingly, CEO clarity on post-agency life varied little by age group.



**5 RECOMMENDATION:** Transitioning workshops, best practices, readings, and coaching that are made available and accessible, should be better designed and appropriately calibrated for the different age groups of incumbent CEOs.

**FINDING:** To varying extents, most umbrella associations currently offer and sponsor transitioning counseling, coaching, and select workshops. These initiatives are facilitating smoother and more effective “baton passes” for CEOs and organization. However, associations are not going as far and as deep in the process (in terms of offerings and for different age groups) as they should, given what looms on the horizon for large numbers of CEOs in the remainder of this decade.


**6 RECOMMENDATION:** Umbrella associations, in collaboration with CEOs, boards, and funding sources, must do more to facilitate the transitioning process. These initiatives need to be offered at earlier career stages and, unquestionably, in more proactive and reassuring postures. Far too often, affirmative steps are initiated and taken too late in the process for any effective planning and action steps to occur.

**FINDING:** Jewish foundations and philanthropists are not sufficiently attuned to the multifaceted dynamics and challenges of effective succession planning in this field. Although the challenges of succession planning are on the agendas at major Jewish funders’ “convenings,” demonstrable action steps and concerted systemic efforts appear to be deferred to future gatherings or sent back to committee for more deliberation.

**7 RECOMMENDATION:** Foundations can be central players in facilitating the transitioning process by supporting and funding specific initiatives to help CEOs and organizations address succession planning challenges. Foundations should also highlight these issues because ROIs of grantees are diminished by ineffective or dysfunctional CEO transitions. Poor morale, premature departures of excellent # 2’s, and board/professional tensions all invariably reduce prospects of optimizing ROIs.

Foundations might be well served to create a partnership fund of \$250,000 to \$500,000 to sponsor regional and national workshops, commission more quantitative research, and implement other initiatives that are designed to facilitate more effective succession planning in Jewish nonprofits.

One new stream of research relates to board chairs. What are they actually thinking and doing to facilitate the process of smoother succession plans for their organization’s CEO?. When CEOs were asked in an open-ended survey question (# 31) what type of additional research would they like to see, the overwhelming request was “what does my board chair think about succession planning?”



**FINDING:** Far too many CEOs believe that because they have given so much time and energy to their organization, they are “entitled” to be the principal determinant of their stepping-down date. As pointed out earlier, this CEO presumption frequently results in awkward power struggles. Why this sad scenario occurs can be attributable to at least two causes. First, there appears to be an overreach in responsibility on the part of the CEO and a consequent feeling of organizational ownership. Second, there seems to be a concomitant and unintended board abdication of responsibility and authority.

**8 RECOMMENDATION:** Boards need to be more “present,” transparent, and proactive in defining CEO expectations and goals and in understanding what it realistically takes to run their organization. They must do a far better job in carrying out annual and more sophisticated performance reviews. CEOs, for their part, need to have better defined job descriptions and to feel less invested in their organization’s governance.

Moreover, CEOs need to empower their senior staffs more effectively and develop management team capacity to assume more responsibility. By doing so, CEOs will then feel less obligated to devote their personal time to the organization and perhaps not feel “I have to do so much ...and so much is owed to me.”


By more effectively delegating they also increase the likelihood of retaining their very best people, who have the most potential to be their successors. Too many strong # 2’s, both men and women, leave prematurely because they are not professionally stretched nor given enough responsibility to grow. (An important body of leadership research suggests that the single most essential task for true leaders is to prepare well for their own succession. That is a most important professional legacy, and it is true sustainability.)

Finally, increased delegation of time and energies to management teams will enable CEOs at age 60 to comfortably (and without guilt) carve out time to initiate and plan more effectively for their own post-agency lives and possible “encore” careers.

**FINDING:** As noted, CEOs express a prevalent concern about becoming a lame duck when their departure date becomes public. There is a corollary concern about being asked by the board to step down earlier than requested.

**9 RECOMMENDATION:** When CEOs are approximately two years from what they envision as their possible stepping-down date, they, their Chair, and Chair-elect should have a private conversation to set a mutually acceptable and realistic date and a timetable for next steps in succession planning.

After the date is publicly announced, the Board Chair should state, unequivocally, to the full board, full staff, and all stakeholders that this date is firm. In addition, it must be clear that until that date, “our”



CEO is totally in charge and will have complete, undiminished board support.

The CEO should likewise commit to the timetable and the date. He or she must also commit to helping plan a smooth succession by developing an appropriate pool of successors. If no successor appears to be on staff, then the CEO and board should collaboratively seek to identify and retain a possible successor (or successors) early during the two years.

Moreover, CEOs should pledge that, until the agreed-on departure date, to the extent possible, they will balance the necessary energies of effectively leading the organization with the energies devoted to effective planning and preparing for a meaningful and fulfilling post-agency life.

**FINDING:** Significant areas of gender-related concerns regarding CEOs in the Jewish nonprofit field surfaced in this research. Of particular note are the high percentages of CEOs who are male compared to the high percentages of # 2's who are female. Moreover, males are much more likely to lead large organizations.



**10 RECOMMENDATION:** Additional, more targeted research on gender-related issues in senior management in Jewish nonprofits should be funded and undertaken.

# APPENDIX A: Survey Instrument









The following is the complete survey instrument that was fielded to the targeted population in early November 2011. Data collection concluded in early January 2012.

If the reader did not participate in the survey, it might prove instructive to review the actual survey and aggregated data reported. This 15 minute step will help you understand this report and be able to accept or challenge its findings and recommendations.







## 1. Gender

		Response Percent	Response Count
Male		60.5%	263
Female		39.5%	172
answered question			435
skipped question			5

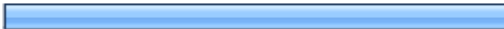






## 2. Age

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 55		27.9%	122
55-57		16.9%	74
58-60		22.1%	97
61-63		15.3%	67
64-66		11.0%	48
67-69		4.6%	20
70-72		1.4%	6
More than 72		0.9%	4
answered question			438
skipped question			2

### 3. Years in current position?






		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 2		12.6%	55
2-6		29.5%	129
7-11		25.4%	111
12-16		13.7%	60
17-21		7.6%	33
More than 21		11.2%	49
answered question			437
skipped question			3

### 4. Currently, are you....

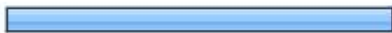




		Response Percent	Response Count
Married		85.6%	373
Divorced		6.9%	30
Separated		1.1%	5
Widowed		0.9%	4
Single		3.7%	16
Partnership		1.6%	7
Not Applicable		0.2%	1
Other (please specify)			1
answered question			436
skipped question			4














### 5. How many children or step children do you have?

		Response Percent	Response Count
None		9.0%	39
1-2		51.5%	223
3-4		33.0%	143
5-6		4.4%	19
7 or more		2.1%	9
answered question			433
skipped question			7


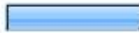




### 6. How many grandchildren do you have?

		Response Percent	Response Count
None		66.2%	286
1-2		16.2%	70
3-4		8.8%	38
5-6		5.1%	22
7 or more		3.7%	16
answered question			432
skipped question			8




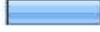



## 7. Your type of Current Organization...

		Response Percent	Response Count
Camp		12.6%	55
Advocacy (JCRC, ADL, American Friends of...)		4.8%	21
School/Education Agency		8.5%	37
National Agency		2.5%	11
Hillel		4.6%	20
Federation		11.9%	52
JCC		12.8%	56
Family/Children's Services/JVS		12.4%	54
Seniors and Aging/Hospital		5.5%	24
<b>Synagogue Director</b>		<b>23.1%</b>	<b>101</b>
Foundations		1.4%	6
Other (please specify)			1
answered question			<b>437</b>
skipped question			<b>3</b>

### 8. What is the size of your organization in full time staff equivalents?

		Response Percent	Response Count
1-10		33.0%	144
11-25		22.4%	98
26-75		19.2%	84
76-125		10.3%	45
126-250		7.1%	31
More than 250		8.0%	35
answered question			437
skipped question			3

### 9. In what region is your office located?

		Response Percent	Response Count
New England		14.7%	64
Mid Atlantic States		32.2%	140
South (Below Virginia)		12.2%	53
Midwest		15.6%	68
Southwest		6.9%	30
Pacific Coast		10.6%	46
Canada		7.8%	34
Other (please specify)			2
answered question			435
skipped question			5





**10. Check all areas in which you may have worked PRIOR to current position.**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Always in Jewish nonprofits		47.6%	208
Nonprofits in other fields/hospital/healthcare		30.0%	131
Consulting		11.9%	52
Self employed (non-consulting)		11.4%	50
Foundations/Philanthropy		4.1%	18
Business/Corporate/Law		30.0%	131
Education (all levels)		27.0%	118
Government/Military		9.6%	42
Other (please specify)			3
answered question			437
skipped question			3



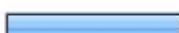


**11. Do you presently have specific plans, and an approximate date in mind, to step down from your current position?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		29.0%	127
No		58.4%	256
Unclear		12.6%	55
Other (please specify)			3
answered question			438
skipped question			2







**12. If answer to previous question is "yes", in how many years are you considering stepping down from your current position?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 1		15.8%	21
1-2		20.3%	27
3-4		23.3%	31
About 5 or more		40.6%	54
Other (please specify)			6
answered question			133
skipped question			307



**13. When you leave your position, do you expect to stay in your same city?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Definitely not		4.7%	19
Unlikely		11.1%	45
Maybe		29.5%	119
Likely		32.7%	132
Definitely so		22.0%	89
Other (please specify)			1
answered question			404
skipped question			36






#### 14. What is the age of your 2nd in charge? (Deputy Dir./COO/Assoc Dir., etc)

		Response Percent	Response Count
No 2nd in charge		36.2%	157
Less than 30		6.7%	29
31-40		12.2%	53
41-50		18.9%	82
51-60		17.3%	75
More than 60		8.8%	38
answered question			434
skipped question			6






#### 15. If you have a 2nd in charge, what is the person's gender?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Female		62.3%	192
Male		26.3%	81
answered question			308
skipped question			132






**16. If you were to step down from your current job next September, to what extent do you have a clear idea of what you'd like to do, afterwards?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		17.6%	72
<b>Slight</b>		<b>33.0%</b>	<b>135</b>
Moderate		29.1%	119
Strong		16.4%	67
Very strong		3.9%	16
answered question			409
skipped question			31






**17. How much time in advance do you feel it appropriate for CEOs to tell board chair of their intention to step down?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 6 months		9.2%	38
<b>6 months to 1 yr</b>		<b>51.1%</b>	<b>210</b>
1-2 years		35.8%	147
More than 2 years		3.2%	13
No idea		0.7%	3
answered question			411
skipped question			29

### 18. In your organization who decides when the CEO steps down?

		Response Percent	Response Count
CEO solely		13.8%	56
Mostly CEO		26.7%	108
<b>Jointly- Board/CEO</b>		<b>48.9%</b>	<b>198</b>
Mostly Board		7.7%	31
Board solely		3.0%	12
answered question			405
skipped question			35

### 19. If you stepped down from your position tomorrow, for whatever reason, would someone in your organization be temporarily capable of assuming your role?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Definitely so		14.4%	59
Probably so		16.8%	69
Maybe		25.9%	106
<b>Probably not</b>		<b>32.0%</b>	<b>131</b>
Definitely not		11.0%	45
answered question			410
skipped question			30








20. If, "definitely so" or "probably so", who among the following are prepared to assume all or part of your responsibilities? (You may check more than one)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Board chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	10.3%	19
2nd in charge (if designated)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	69.2%	128
Management team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	41.1%	76
Interim exec (someone outside your current staff)	<input type="checkbox"/>	15.7%	29
Other (please specify)			11
answered question			185
skipped question			255






## 21. When thinking about stepping down, how concerned are you about the following areas?

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Strongly	Very Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Unsure what else I'd do as meaningful/fulfilling	17.6% (72)	16.1% (66)	23.2% (95)	<b>31.2% (128)</b>	12.0% (49)	3.04	410
Economic uncertainties regarding how I'll maintain quality of life	4.4% (18)	11.7% (48)	23.4% (96)	<b>35.9% (147)</b>	24.6% (101)	3.65	410
Self-conscious about perception of being retired	<b>48.5% (199)</b>	22.0% (90)	19.8% (81)	8.0% (33)	1.7% (7)	1.92	410
Loss of stature	<b>39.0% (160)</b>	28.3% (116)	22.2% (91)	9.0% (37)	1.5% (6)	2.06	410
How spouse, partner, family, close friends, etc would deal with my transition	<b>41.2% (166)</b>	31.3% (126)	17.9% (72)	7.7% (31)	2.0% (8)	1.98	403
My job is not done; more to do (e.g. strategic plan)	13.9% (56)	15.1% (61)	24.3% (98)	<b>36.2% (146)</b>	10.4% (42)	3.14	403
No one else has my fundraising connections	<b>40.4% (163)</b>	25.8% (104)	20.8% (84)	8.7% (35)	4.2% (17)	2.10	403
Might take too long for someone to be as effective as I am now	16.7% (68)	19.4% (79)	29.2% (119)	<b>30.7% (125)</b>	3.9% (16)	2.86	407
Devoted so much to this job; prefer leaving when I feel it appropriate	11.1% (45)	9.9% (40)	20.4% (83)	<b>37.7% (153)</b>	20.9% (85)	3.48	406
Really isn't any obvious successor on staff	10.9% (44)	13.9% (56)	23.3% (94)	<b>32.3% (130)</b>	19.6% (79)	3.36	403
Other (please specify)							5
answered question							410
skipped question							30

22. How concerned are you about the "lame duck" issue? ("Lame duck" status has been defined as the period between the announcement to step down and the actual stepping down and where incumbent may be perceived as having less authority/influence with staff and other constituencies)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		29.3%	120
Slightly		28.1%	115
<b>Moderately</b>		<b>30.1%</b>	<b>123</b>
Strongly		10.5%	43
Very Strongly		2.0%	8
answered question			409
skipped question			31






23. If you were to make your intention to step down known to your board chair, how concerned are you about being asked to step down earlier than intended?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		36.7%	150
Slightly		27.6%	113
Moderately		23.0%	94
Strongly		10.0%	41
Very Strongly		2.7%	11
answered question			409
skipped question			31





**24. When you decide to step down, with whom would you FIRST share that decision and then, with whom next? (Please provide 4 responses and, if simultaneous, check same box numbers )**

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Rating Average	Response Count
Board chair	<b>82.8% (331)</b>	15.3% (61)	1.5% (6)	0.5% (2)	1.20	400
Board chair-elect	23.9% (47)	<b>57.9% (114)</b>	15.2% (30)	3.0% (6)	1.97	197
Full board	5.0% (15)	29.5% (89)	<b>37.4% (113)</b>	28.1% (85)	2.89	302
Rabbi/Clergy	<b>89.3% (25)</b>	7.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.6% (1)	1.18	28
Spouse/Family	<b>100.0% (12)</b>	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.00	12
President of your "umbrella" professional association for field	18.9% (21)	<b>32.4% (36)</b>	24.3% (27)	24.3% (27)	2.54	111
Closest peers in field	14.8% (30)	22.2% (45)	28.6% (58)	<b>34.5% (70)</b>	2.83	203
Management team	20.2% (67)	<b>36.3% (120)</b>	27.8% (92)	15.7% (52)	2.39	331
Key funders	3.2% (5)	20.1% (31)	31.8% (49)	<b>44.8% (69)</b>	3.18	154
Other (please specify)						11
<b>answered question</b>						<b>409</b>
<b>skipped question</b>						<b>31</b>

25. If you were to leave your position within the next 6-12 months, how confident are you that your board will find the right replacement?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		8.0%	33
Slightly		31.7%	130
<b>Moderately</b>		<b>35.1%</b>	<b>144</b>
Strongly		19.0%	78
Very Strongly		6.1%	25
answered question			410
skipped question			30






26. Does your organization have in place an Emergency Back-up Plan? (Emergency Back-up Plan is a written document detailing what's to be done with a sudden, unexpected CEO departure)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		6.3%	26
<b>No</b>		<b>81.0%</b>	<b>332</b>
Yes, but not written		11.5%	47
Unsure		1.2%	5
answered question			410
skipped question			30

**27. Does your organization have a board-adopted succession policy? (Succession policy provides guidance and measured steps for a point in time in the FUTURE when there is a planned or unplanned CEO departure)**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		7.1%	29
No		90.7%	369
Unsure		2.2%	9
answered question			407
skipped question			33

**28. If your organization has a CEO succession policy, check all elements included.**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Designates person (typically Board chair) responsible for implementing plan		77.3%	34
Determines steps board will take to fill CEO position		77.3%	34
Addresses appointment of acting/interim executive, if appropriate		63.6%	28
Articulates how permanent CEO is selected (appointment/composition of search committee, if search firm is retained, how internal candidates are considered, etc.)		68.2%	30
Specifies who responsible for external communications on the transition		52.3%	23
Other (please specify)			6
answered question			44
skipped question			396



## 29. Indicate extent to which each activity would be helpful to you, at your current stage?

	Not at All	Slight	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Rating Average	Response Count
Receiving "best practices" on effective CEO transition management	10.6% (43)	15.8% (64)	20.7% (84)	<b>42.5% (172)</b>	10.4% (42)	3.26	405
Attending workshops on transition management	19.0% (77)	18.0% (73)	21.0% (85)	<b>36.3% (147)</b>	5.7% (23)	2.92	405
Having mini-sabbatical to explore transition issues or options-- or as dry run to assess if organization is ready to sustain a transition	<b>34.9% (141)</b>	22.0% (89)	24.5% (99)	14.1% (57)	4.5% (18)	2.31	404
Coaching by former CEO in my field who successfully transitioned	21.0% (85)	17.3% (70)	<b>32.2% (130)</b>	23.3% (94)	6.2% (25)	2.76	404
Coaching by external consultant in transition management	22.4% (90)	15.5% (62)	22.4% (90)	<b>31.9% (128)</b>	7.7% (31)	2.87	401
Connecting with CEO peers in my field at same career stage	12.9% (52)	12.2% (49)	<b>36.3% (146)</b>	30.3% (122)	8.2% (33)	3.09	402
Connecting with CEO peers in my community at same career stage, but NOT in my field	<b>34.4% (138)</b>	27.2% (109)	25.4% (102)	9.7% (39)	3.2% (13)	2.20	401
Reading articles/cases on CEO transitioning	13.2% (53)	19.9% (80)	21.4% (86)	<b>26.4% (106)</b>	19.2% (77)	3.18	402
Other (please specify)							17
answered question							406
skipped question							34

**30. Please list any recommendations or specific "best practices" on CEO Transitioning in which you engage, have engaged, or are aware of within your own organization. Additionally, list any programs or practices coordinated through your professional association(s), home community or a foundation or consulting firm.**

**31. Comment on other issues/aspects of the CEO transitioning topic, not touched upon in this survey and deemed very relevant to you.**

**32. Propose any specific questions/areas you'd like to see addressed in a future inquiry on CEO or on organizational transitioning.**

**33. When you announce your intention to step down from the CEO position, where might your organization turn IF it seeks counsel/support on transition processes?**

**34. If you wish to follow up with the researcher on any aspect of this survey or research, please list your name and email below. (Any conversation or communicate will be strictly confidential)**

**35. OPTIONAL - Your name, organization and email**



## APPENDIX B: Best Practices

This appendix focuses on “*best practices*” for succession planning in Jewish nonprofits. It contains a partial listing and presentation of what is available and adaptable from nonprofits, including those in the field of Jewish communal service.

A future publication is projected to incorporate and assess “*best practices*” of a broader base of organizations, including those in the corporate sector. Because of time constraints, these materials could not be incorporated into this report.


See Appendices C and D, which present excellent and adaptable “*best practices*” templates on ***Emergency Back up Plans*** and on ***Succession Plans***, and have been reprinted with permission from a BoardSource 2012 publication.

The survey asked respondents the following question:

**30. Please list any recommendations or specific “best practices” on CEO Transitioning in which you engage, have engaged, or are aware of within your own organization. Additionally, list any programs or practices coordinated through your professional association(s), home community or a foundation or consulting firm.**

As noted from the findings, although the respondents expressed considerable interest in gaining access to workshops, readings, counseling, coaching, and other programs that might assist them in plans for transitioning to the next stages, few indicated that they were currently engaged or aware of any of those activities in their organization. The following is a summary of the major findings regarding best practices in which CEOs were currently engaged.

- 1) National/North American umbrella associations were cited as doing the most in the realm of education on succession planning. The JCCA and AJFCA both appear to be focusing more on these transitional areas, although other associations are starting to offer programs and services at their annual conferences. JFNA’s Mandel Center is also increasing its counseling and coaching resources. In short, the subject is clearly starting to be positioned more centrally on professional development agendas. This has been corroborated by numerous conversations with liaison staff at these umbrella associations.
- 2) Local community foundations are increasingly sponsoring and, at times, offering transition workshops. Baltimore has been in the forefront in offering transitioning planning resources.
- 3) A number of respondents indicated that some board members have local corporate affiliations, which are enabling them to meet with their HR staff and, very selectively, participate in transitional preparation programs run by those companies.

- 
- 4) A number of respondents indicated that some board members have local corporate affiliations, which are enabling them to meet with their HR staff and, very selectively, participate in transitional preparation programs run by those companies. A mini-sabbatical for post-agency exploration was cited by one respondent. Such programs are being offered increasingly in other nonprofit fields. They provide 1- to 4-month “time away” periods from the organization to be used to explore post-agency options in another setting, determine an appropriate fit, and also what it might take to enter this field as an “encore career.” They can also serve as excellent ways to test out the interests and skills of possible on-staff successors.

Probably the best time to begin to explore a mini-sabbatical is during ages 59-62. Two recent publications provide excellent information “Sabbaticals: A Checklist for Preparing, Managing and Re-Entering” ([www.virtualcap.org/downloads/VC/US\\_Succession\\_CompassPoint\\_Sabbatical\\_Checklist.pdf](http://www.virtualcap.org/downloads/VC/US_Succession_CompassPoint_Sabbatical_Checklist.pdf)) and “Creative Disruptions: Sabbaticals for Capacity Building and Leadership Development” (<http://www.compasspoint.org/creativedisruption>).

- 5) See Appendix E - Resources for a listing of organizations that provide excellent workshops, counseling, and publications on transition management and succession planning

## APPENDIX C: Emergency Back-up Plan Template

### A. Communications Plan

Who is the first point of contact in the event of a change in the executive director's situation?  
(Typically this would be the board chair)

This person should be prepared to notify all board members and discuss next steps.

Subsequent communication containing the circumstances and recommended plan of action should be sent to all board members for approval and the staff for information.

Once the plan of action has been determined, a message from the board chair should be sent to the organization's key stakeholders detailing the plan for the leadership transition.

### B. Financial Oversight

Having multiple signatories on the organization's checking accounts enables business to continue in the chief executive's absence. These signatories might include the chair and the secretary-treasurer (who could also be included on the investment account).

To account for geographical differences, it should be possible to make transactions electronically on all of the accounts.

Contact information for financial advisors should be available for questions on financial issues.


Contact information for accountants (internal and external) should be available to ensure that timely employee payroll payments are continued.

Other critical information and contact lists should be available to the board chair in the event of an emergency (e.g., contact information for key funders and upcoming deadlines on key activities, such as the deadline for filing the IRS Form 990).

### C. Interim Management

Who will the board designate to perform the chief executive's essential duties before the search and selection process has been completed to appoint the permanent chief executive? Should this be determined in advance for short-term periods (e.g., three months) versus longer term periods? Two options for interim management are:

1. An acting chief executive appointed by the board to provide leadership during the planning and/or implementation phases of the executive search. This might be a senior manager or a board member.
2. An interim chief executive who helps prepare the organization to work effectively with the next chief executive. This might be a seasoned executive from outside the organization.



#### D. Executive Search

While interim management is in place, is the board likely to work with an executive search consultant? If so, what are the best sources of recommendations on qualified search consultants for the board to consider?

What action will the board take to appoint a search committee?

What is the proper delegation of authority between the search committee and the board?

Portions of an emergency leadership transition management plan can be tested when the chief executive takes a vacation, a sabbatical, or some other time away from the organization. This can provide a good opportunity to observe the mettle of emerging leaders within the organization.

## APPENDIX D: Template on Succession Plan

Succession planning can strategically position an organization for success before an expected or unforeseen departure of the chief executive. There is no generic template for executive succession planning that will apply to every organization. While the content and timeline of the succession plan should be customized to the circumstances and culture of the organization, the following practices reflect an effective plan.

### On an annual basis:

Create or update an emergency leadership transition plan

Conduct a performance review of the chief executive.

Assess the chief executive's performance against mutually agreed-upon goals and expectations determined the previous year.

Implement a process for reviewing the compensation of the chief executive that conforms to the IRS Form 990 and best practice requirements.

Determine institutional goals and personal goals that the chief executive will be accountable for during the next performance assessment process.

Clarify expectations between the board and chief executive.

Ensure that the board and the chief executive have shared goals and a collective vision of how the organization should be evolving over the next three to five years.

Discuss the chief executive's future plans (regarding term of office).

Review or update the chief executive job description.

Determine whether the succession plan should be created, updated, or tweaked.


Conduct a board of self-assessment.

Identify the board's strengths and needs.

Define goals that the board is responsible for implementing.

Determine how well the board is working with the chief executive.

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Determine actions the board will take to act on the results of the board self-assessment for the purpose of strengthening its structure and practices.

When the chief executive's departure is known:

Implement emergency leadership transition actions, if necessary.

Discuss lessons learned by the board and staff members who participated in the last chief executive transition process that represent things to repeat or avoid during the next transition.

Determine whether an interim chief executive or acting chief executive should provide short-term leadership.

Create a schedule for the executive transition.

Communicate the executive transition plan with the appropriate constituencies.

Conduct an organizational assessment to determine leadership needs relevant for the next chief executive.

Convene a search committee to create chief executive profile, recruit candidates, rank applicants, interview candidates, check references, and recommend final candidate (s) to the board.

Select a new chief executive.

After the new chief executive is selected:

Create a leadership transition team.

Implement a communications plan to inform the community of the new appointment.

Provide a formal orientation for the new chief executive.

Agree on written goals and expectations for the chief executive.

Ensure that the expectations and decision-making responsibilities between the board and the chief executive are well delineated.

Create a timeline for a new succession plan (which defines the role of the board and the chief executive in the process).

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## APPENDIX E: Further Resources

### A) Organizations and Their Helpful Resources:

1. Transitions Guides/Annie E Casey Foundation- Baltimore: National experts in succession, executive search and sustainability for nonprofit organizations [info@transitionguides.com]  
See ***Executive Transitions Monograph Series*** and selected articles by Don Tebbe and Tom Adams.
2. Compass Point/ Fieldstone Alliance- San Francisco: [www.Compasspoint.org](http://www.Compasspoint.org)  
See especially ***Managing Executive Transitions- A Guide for Non Profits*** by Tim Wolfred
3. Bridgestar/Bridgespan- Boston: leadershipmatters@bridgestar.org  
<http://www.bridgestar.org/Library/BuildingLeadershipCapacity.aspx>
4. Civic Ventures/Encore Careers- National organization with offices in major cities:  
[www.civicventures.org](http://www.civicventures.org); see ***The Big Shift: Navigating the New Stage Beyond Midlife***, published in April 2011.
5. Gestalt International Study Center- Cape Cod, MA and other locations around the United States:  
[www.gisc.org](http://www.gisc.org); See workshop “*Next Phase: Life Strategies for Navigating Personal and Professional Transitions.*”
6. Keystone Partners - Boston, MA and locations worldwide:  
[www.keystonepartners.com](http://www.keystonepartners.com); executive career transition, executive positions, board placement and retirement planning, executive coaching (Essex Partners, a Keystone division, serves C-level executives: [www.essexpartners.com](http://www.essexpartners.com))
7. ReServe: Program that helps people over 55 find meaningful work  
*Fixes: In a Second Career, Working to Make a Difference* by Tina Rosenberg
8. BoardSource- Washington DC : See ***Chief Executive Succession Planning: Essential Guidance for Boards and CEOs***, by Nancy Axelrod
9. B3- the Jewish Boomers Platform- New York: Organization led by David Elcott and Stuart Himmelfarb [www.B3platform.org](http://www.B3platform.org)
10. AARP/ Encore Careers- Washington, DC



## B) Publications and Articles of Note

1. *Daring to Lead 2011- A National Survey Of Nonprofit Executive Leadership*, a joint project of Compass Point NonProfit Services and the Meyers Foundation: [daringtolead.org](http://daringtolead.org)
2. *Leadership Succession Planning: Implications for Nonprofit Human Service Organizations*, by Dr. Michael Austin and Suzanne Gothard, Mack Center for Nonprofit Management, UC-Berkeley (Publication pending in the *Administration of Social Work*, 2012)
3. *Executive Development & Succession Planning: A Growing Challenge for the Jewish Community*, Dr. [Michael Austin](#) and [Tracy Salkowitz](#); [Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies](#), [Jewish Funders Network \(JFN\)](#), June 2009
4. *Managing Leadership Transitions for Nonprofits: Passing the Torch to Sustain Organizational Excellence*, Barry Dym, Susan Egmont and Laura Watkins. FT Press, 2011)
5. *A Guide to Retirement Plans*, <http://philanthropy.com/article/A-Guide-to-Retirement-Plan/52497/>
6. "When Will You Retire," <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/13/opinion/when-will-you-retire.html?emc=eta1>
7. [Myretirementorgfeedback@tiaa-cref.org](mailto:Myretirementorgfeedback@tiaa-cref.org)
8. <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/founders-transitions/>
9. <http://www.mynextphase.com/public/about-press-hrexec-1206.php>
10. *Retirement and Playing Catch Up*, <http://articles.moneycentral.msn.com/RetirementandWills/PlayingCatchUp/weston-10-signs-you-are-not-ready-to-retire.aspx>







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